2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
EZ6 Malta EZ6

religious processions. The greatest concentration of ceremonies is around Easter. This cycle starts with the feast of Our Lady of Sorrows on the Friday before Palm Sunday. Virtually all the inhabitants escort the statue through the principal streets of the village. This is followed by the Palm Sunday procession around the church square.[1] On Maundy Thursday there is a long service during which the parish priest washes the feet of twelve village laymen. Immediately after this the church is draped completely in black damask, and a huge wooden rattle replaces the church bells as a sign of mourning. On Maundy Thursday and on Good Friday in the morning, family groups visit the church and, passing before the statues depicting scenes from the Passion, stop to pray before the elaborate Sepulchre constructed in one of the chapels. Members of each of the village associations and clubs visit the Sepulchre in groups. Many families make pilgrimages to the churches in the twelve other parishes which hold Good Friday processions. At each one they offer prayers before the Sepulchre and pause to examine the statues and funereal hangings of their rivals before going on. All morning visitors from outside stream into Kortin to see the church. Then, at about two in the afternoon, there is a three-hour sermon on the Passion. This is followed by the Good Friday procession.

Old Manwel, the procurator, directs the procession. This is his big day. During the preceding weeks, he and Anton and Pawlu, the two men who take charge of decorating the parish for special occasions, worked very hard getting ready the eight statues, assembling the ornate Sepulchre and collecting the £90 required to meet the expenses of the Holy Week. Since he became procurator twenty years ago, Manwel has collected almost £3,000 for new statues, costumes, banners and black damask for the church. The procession itself lasts about three hours. Some 420 men and youths from the village carry and escort the eight huge statues. Some of the men have carried the same statue for years. The ten who carry the statue of the Crucifixion have protected their right to do so by a notarized contract with the parish priest. In return they have spent almost £200 over the past ten years to

[1] Instead of palm fronds, olive branches are distributed to the faithful. It is generally believed that if these blessed branches are burned, their smoke is particularly effective against the harmful effects of the evil eye. Farmers pass burning leaves through their cattle sheds, and I have met professionals who do the same to their salons before cocktail parties.

7: Busuttil I, Y-4, 5 (no date) 1894
EZ6 Malta EZ6

OMENS AND SUPERSTITIONS

ST. PAUL'S TONGUE

It was a popular belief among our ancestors that the teeth of fish, which we find embedded in some of the rocks, are St. Paul's *tongue*, which during his sermons penetrated even the solid rock. These fossils were pounded and the powder was held to possess a miraculous power in healing wounds.

Till recently it has been known that some of our countryfolks used to carry one of these teeth about with them, sometimes mounted on silver and hung about their necks, as an amulet against the bites of venomous vipers—at one time very abundant in Malta.

825
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7: Busuttil I, Y-4, 5 (no date) 1894
EZ6 Malta EZ6

755 [824] are thrown some flowers which were used to decorate the sepulchre on Good Friday.

This the mothers do to cure their little ones from any fright they may have taken.

•751 Some mothers dip their other children in succession in the same bath when the baby is taken out, and this they do in order that their children might not inherit the fright the one from the other.

THE FOOT BATH

757 Some people say that when you bathe your feet in hot water, while under the influence of fever, or head ache, a little salt should be added to the water to [755] strengthen it. But in order that the

8:Brockman T-5 (no date) 1938
EZ6 Malta EZ6

241 823 [171] Husbandmen would still consider that queer operation as a medium of impregnation (*Dukkar*). This strange usage may, however, be traced amongst the *fellahin* of Upper Egypt, where, as Professor Sayce points out in his contribution to the *Cairene and Upper Egypt Folklore* (Folklore, Vol. XXXI, No. 2, 1920, p. 200) phallic symbols are still hung up to protect the melons and sugar-cane. The old Maltese practice of hanging up stones to the jujube-tree may therefore be considered as a modification of this early phallic worship."[1]

The sense contained in these practices requires no elucidation. The horticulturist with his camel hair brush does no better than the peasant with the male carob flowers. The votive stones are a silent appeal to the oldest and greatest of the Old Things, to the All-Father, Giver of Life and Fertility, whose ancient and enduring image, from Drizzlecombe in Devon to the High Places of Melanesia, is the Rock or Stone without shape—the altar of "The Unknown God"—"Thou art Peter and upon this Rock. . . ."

[538] Traces of this rock-cult are plentiful enough in Maltese folklore. Children who throw stones into a well or into the sea will one day have to gather them up by their eyelashes. The "old stones" (i.e. *menhir*) resent being moved and are, for that reason, twice as heavy as ordinary stones.

751 825 776 "St. Paul's tongue"—a valuable amulet against the evil-eye and against all venoms—takes the form of fossilized teeth found in the ancient rocks. The blessed tongue which preached the gospel of the Redeemer is enshrined for ever in rock, the symbol of the Father.

776 823 St. Paul's rock-cell, in which he is reputed to have lived, has the miraculous property that no matter how much of the rock is cut away its bulk grows no less—a clear expression

[1] Lecture by Mr. Cremona at the University of Malta in 1922.